Teaching how to Manage Negotiations with Character

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Course Description: "Managing Negotiations" teaches undergraduate students basic negotiation concepts, and how to put those concepts into practice with weekly role-plays. Students prepare roles that they act out with different partners, and often both partners have different sets of information and priorities. The experiential nature of the course lets students build confidence and competence in creating, and not just claiming value across differing needs, priorities, and values. In this way, students learn that building relationships takes practiced skills.

Conceptual Bases for Character: While inquiry and advocacy in communicating across roles is learned over time, as is building trust and rapport, the focus on relationships in class is often instrumental, and ultimately valued for the financial outcomes generated in the role play. I introduce students to the notion of "character" (from the Aristotelian framework of "virtue") on the first day of class, and we discuss what it means to treat people as ends in themselves, and not just means (from Kant's framework on "dignity"). When we objectify people, concepts like "interpersonal" and "intersubjective" become empty.

Priming "Relational Character" with Role-Plays: To put this into practice, I provide additional information to what is provided in the negotiation cases that students purchase, and use their experiences to develop discussions about "character" in our relationships with each other:

- <u>Modify role information</u>: I develop modifications that I print and hand out to the students, playing around with which role receives any or which modification. For example, for the "Buyer" role in the "Sugar Bowl" role-play, I may slip someone a sheet that says, "I have a sense of gratitude for the person, or a sense of thankfulness and joy that they can help me out" (simple) OR "When you get closer to the seller, you realize that s/he is actually a well-known fixture at this fair. Making a "good" deal with him/her could not only set you up for future deals but also be a possible mentor and guide for your new interest in antiquing!" (complex)
- <u>Tally relational outcomes</u>: When we tally up different pairs outcomes in the table projected on the screen, I add a "relational value/outcomes" column (e.g. longer-lasting, trusting relationship) in addition to the financial outcomes across student pairs.
- <u>Debrief</u>: I then develop a discussion about the subjective experience of the interaction, how students weigh the financial and relational outcomes against each other, and whether/how they would develop the relationship.
- <u>Reflect</u>: Students create reflective journal entries (graded) where I can specify prompts about the issue of character and relationships in negotiating.